

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 20020 081955Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00
DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 EURE-00
/054 W

----- 047158

P R 081752Z DEC 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1681

INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE

AMCONSUL MILAN

AMCONSUL NAPLES

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, IT

SUBJECT: ANDREOTTI'S US VISIT DOMINATES ITALIAN MEDIA

SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI'S TWO-DAY WASHINGTON VISIT DOMINATED ITALIAN MEDIA ATTENTION. THE FRONT-PAGE TREATMENT OFTEN ACCOMPANIED BY PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE PRESIDENT AND ANDREOTTI OR SENATOR MONDALE WITH ANDREOTTI, HAS BEEN GENERALLY FAVORABLE. MOST STORIES STRESS ANDREOTTI'S SUCCESS IN OBTAINING SUPPORT IN PRINCIPLE FOR A US-DIRECTED INTERNATIONAL EFFORT TO SUSTAIN THE LIRA AGAINST ANTICIPATED SPECULATIVE PRESSURES IN COMING MONTHS. THE PRIME MINISTER'S EFFORTS TO CONVINCE BOTH US POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCLES OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S ABILITY TO CONFRONT THE CURRENT CRISIS PROVIDED A SECOND THEME. IN THIS CONNECTION, THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS CONTINUES TO CRITICIZE ANDREOTTI'S RECENT PRESS INTERVIEWS WHICH ACKNOWLEDGED THE PCI'S HELPFUL AND MODERATE ROLE IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S EMERGENCY MEASURES. END SUMMARY.

SUMMARY.

1. ANDREOTTI'S MEETINGS WITH THE PRESIDENT, SECRETARIES KISSINGER AND SIMON, AS WELL AS WITH THE IMF WERE REPORTED IN CONSIDERABLE DETAIL. MOST PAPERS STRESSED THE ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES OF THE VISIT, NOTING THAT THE VISIT WAS IMPORTANT IN ESTABLISHING THE CRITERIA FOR FUTURE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RATHER THAN IN SETTTLING SPECIFIC LOAN ARRANGEMENTS. WRITING IN CORRIERE DELLA SERA, UGO STILLE
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PAGE 02 ROME 20020 081955Z

PROVIDED A DETAILED OUTLINE OF THE VARIOUS FORMS OF POSSIBLE FOREIGN

LOAN ASSISTANCE UNDER THE HEADING: "WASHINGTON WILL SUPPORT THE LIRA AGAINST ANY SPECULATIVE MANEUVERES." THE MEETINGS WITH SENATOR MONDALE AND SECRETARY OF STATE-DESIGNATE VANCE WERE JUDGED OF CONSIDERABLE SIGNIFICANCE IN ASSURING THAT "THE AGREEMENTS REACHED WERE SUCH THAT THEY WOULD BE APPROVED BY THE FUTURE CARTER ADMINISTRATION."

2. MOST ACCOUNTS ALSO STRESSED THE POINT MADE BY TURIN'S LA STAMPA THAT "FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS AVAILABLE, BUT ONLY IF AUSTERITY PROGRAMS ARE REALIZED AND EXTENDED TO THE ENTIRE ECONOMIC SPHERE." THE COMMENTATORS GENERALLY POINTED OUT THAT THE "COMMUNIST QUESTION" INEVITABLY CAME UP IN THE CONTEXT OF ANDREOTTI'S ASSURANCES THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD THE POLITICAL CAPACITY TO DEAL EFFECTIVELY WITH THE ECONOMIC CRISIS. AS UGO STILLE REPORTED, ANDREOTTI'S STRATEGIC DESIGN WAS TO "CREATE POLITICAL CRICLES AND IN THE ECONOMIC WORLD A CLIMATE OF CONFIDENCE IN ITALY'S ABILITY TO OVERCOME ITS CURRENT CRISIS IN SUCH A WAY AS TO OBTAIN THE FINANCIAL SUPPORT IT NEEDS."

3. PCI COVERAGE WAS STRAIGHT-FORWARD, EMPHASIZING THE VISIT'S ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES AND THE PCI'S HELPFUL ROLE IN RESOLVING ITALY'S CRISIS. UNITA, FOR EXAMPLE, STRESSED THE FACT THAT ANDREOTTI'S PRESENTATION IN WASHINGTON WAS STRENGTHENED BY THE FACT THAT HE COULD DEMONSTRATE THAT "ALL ITALIAN POLITICAL FORCES, INCLUDING THE PCI AND THE UNIONS, ARE BEHAVING IN A RESPONSIBLE AND SERIOUS WAY." COMMENT: THIS LINE, OF COURSE, ALSO SERVES TO JUSTIFY THE CORRECTNESS OF THE PCI'S LINE TO ITS BASE SINCE THE PAPER GOES ON TO ASSERT THAT FAILURE TO ASSIST ITALY IN OVERCOMING THE CRISIS WOULD HAVE "CATASTROPHIC" REPERCUSSIONS. END COMMENT.

4. AVANTI (PSI) COMMENTS THAT ALTHOUGH THE TRIP MIGHT NOT HAVE BEEN UNDERTAKEN AT THE MOST OPPORTUNE MOMENT, IT WAS PREMATURE TO EXPRESS A JUDGMENT BEFORE THE VISIT'S END. THE SOCIALIST PAPER WAS CRITICAL, HOWEVER, OF POLITICALLY ONEROUS FOREIGN ECONOMIC DEMANDS, PARTICULARLY THE IMF'S POLICY OF "SAVAGE DEFLATION."

5. ANDREOTTI'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IN RECENT FOREIGN PRESS INTERVIEWS (BUSINESS WEEK, LE MONDE, NY TIMES) OF THE PCI'S POLITICAL MODERATION CONTINUES TO TROUBLE THE CONSERVATIVE PRESS. LA NAZIONE RAN A CAUSTIC EDITORIAL CHARGING THAT ANDREOTTI HAS EMBARKED ON "A NEW AND DANGEROUS POLICY" OF CONVINCING THE US THAT PCI PARTICIPATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 ROME 20020 081955Z

IN GOVERNMENT IS NOT ONLY NECESSARY BUT HARMLESS AND HELPFUL. IL GIORNALE'S LUCENTINI ALSO CRITIZES ANDREOTTI FOR "FLIRTING WITH THE IDEA OF AN OPENING TO THE COMMUNISTS" IN HIS OFFICIAL DECLARATIONS.

6. COMMENT: IN VIEWS OF THE ATTENTION FOCUSED BY THE VISIT ON US ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PCI, ANDREOTTI'S PURPOSE IN PORTRAYING THE PCI IN FAVORABLE TERMS IN THE PRE-DEPARTURE PRESS INTERVIEWS IS

PUZZLING. HE SEEMS TO BE ARGUING FOR GREATER US UNDERSTANDING OF THE NEED FOR THE PCI'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ITALIAN POLITICAL PROCESS ON THE PRAGMATIC GROUNDS THAT ITALY'S ECONOMIC PROBLEMS CAN ONLY BE DEALT WITH THE PCI'S BENEVOLENT ASSISTANCE. ANDREOTTI MAY HAVE ALSO FELT COMPELLED PUBLICLY TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE PCI'S HELPFUL ROLE, PARTICULARLY FOR THE US AUDIENCE, AS A MEANS OF DOING SOMETHING POLITICALLY USEFUL FOR THE PCI WHICH DOES NOT COST HIM MUCH IN REAL TERMS. IN ANY EVENT, HIS STATEMENTS FUEL THE SUSPICIONS OF MANY IN HIS PARTY (BY NO MEANS LIMITED TO THE CENTER-RIGHT) THAT ANDREOTTI MAY BE INCLINED TO EFFECT COMPROMISES WITH THE PCI.
BEAUDRY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS, NEWS MEDIA COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 08 DEC 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: vogelfj
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ROME20020
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760453-1226
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19761262/aaaacbgb.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: vogelfj
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <09 SEP 2004 by vogelfj>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ANDREOTTI'S US VISIT DOMINATES ITALIAN MEDIA SUMMARY: PRIME MINISTER ANDREOTTI'S TWO-DAY WASHINGTON VISIT DOMINATED ITALIAN MEDIA ATTENTION. THE FRO NT-PAGE
TAGS: PINT, OVIP, SOPN, IT, US, (ANDREOTTI, GIULIO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006